

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated March 21, 2006. Claims 19 and 20 are in the application, with Claims 17 and 18 having been canceled herein, and new Claims 19 and 20 having been added. Claim 19 is the independent claim. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 17 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,862,223 (Walker). Claims 17 and 18 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter and without conceding the correctness of the rejections. Newly-added Claims 19 and 20 are believed to be allowable over the applied reference for at least the reasons given below.

Referring specifically to the claims, independent Claim 19 defines a help server apparatus comprising inquiry receiving means for receiving contents of an inquiry from a user terminal apparatus, first communication ability receiving means for receiving, from the user terminal apparatus, information related to the communication ability of the user terminal apparatus in order of priority, and extracting means for extracting a key word from the contents of the inquiry. The apparatus also comprises searching means for searching a helper terminal apparatus on the basis of the key word, second communication ability receiving means for receiving, from the helper terminal apparatus in order of priority, information relating to the communication ability desired by the helper terminal apparatus, and producing means for producing a list of the helper terminal apparatuses. The apparatus also comprises list transmitting means for transmitting the list to the user terminal apparatus, selection receiving means for receiving, from the user terminal apparatus, a request of a session with a helper terminal apparatus selected from the list, and determining means for automatically determining a communication ability to be applied to the session on the basis of the information relating to the communication ability of the user terminal apparatus and the information relating to the communication ability desired by the helper terminal apparatus. The apparatus also comprises transferring means for

transferring the request of session to the helper terminal apparatus together with the determined communication ability, and settlement means for confirming that the requested session was started normally, performing charging processing to a user, and performing charge payment processing to the help server apparatus.

The previously-applied reference, namely Walker, is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of independent Claim 19, and in particular, is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the features of (1) receiving, from a user terminal apparatus, information related to the communication ability of the user terminal apparatus in order of priority, (2) receiving, from a helper terminal apparatus in order of priority, information relating to the communication ability desired by the helper terminal apparatus, and (3) automatically determining a communication ability to be applied to the session on the basis of the information relating to the communication ability of the user terminal apparatus and the information relating to the communication ability desired by the helper terminal apparatus.

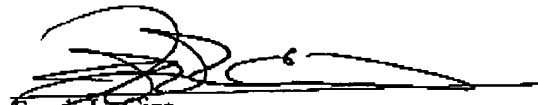
As understood by Applicant, Walker discloses an expert matching method and apparatus for managing communications between an expert having particular qualifications and an end user seeking a solution to an expert request. A controller receives an expert request and a search program identifies experts qualified to respond to the expert request. The expert request is transmitted to the expert, which results in an expert answer being transmitted to the controller and forwarded to the end user. However, Walker is not seen to disclose or suggest the foregoing features of the present invention. Accordingly, independent Claim 19 is believed to be allowable.

The other claim in the application is dependent from the independent claim discussed above and therefore is believed to be allowable over the previously-applied reference for at least the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office by telephone at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,



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